CAB Rewrites Rules, A Break For Smokers

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The Civil Aeronautics Board has instructed its staff to rewrite the rules governing smoking on the nation's airlines. Under the new rules, airplanes would still be divided into smoking and no-smoking sections. But nonsmokers would have to arrive within a reasonable time before departure to be assured a no-smoking section seat.

CAB in a news release said the rules will balance "the rights of smokers and nonsmokers and, at the same time, provide airline management with greater flexibility in the regulation of smoking."

Prior to this, an airline has had to provide a seat in the nonsmoking section to any passenger who demands one, even if they were last-minute arrivals.

That system has been criticized by airlines as causing chaos and flight delays, as rows have to be rearranged to accommodate late-arriving nonsmokers.

Seven domestic airlines surveyed by The Observer said that nonsmokers will have to arrive at least five minutes, and perhaps up to 15 minutes before departure, depending on the individual airline, to be guaranteed a no-smoking section seat.

Deregulation

Two of the five Board members urged that smoking on airlines be deregulated, leaving that matter up to the airlines and the marketplace.

Board member George Dalley said this is the "golden opportunity" to get government out of regulating in this area. "It is time," he said, "to stop spending government time and resources monitoring individual smokers."

The CAB is scheduled to be phased out within the next several years. It is not certain at this time what will happen to the smoking rules when the CAB no longer exists.

The nation's airlines will continue to divide their planes into smoking and no-smoking sections, under rules adopted by the Civil Aeronautics Board. But nonsmokers will have to arrive at least five minutes before departure to be assured a no-smoking section seat.

August 1981

2026260131

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/jkgk0000